

TRINITY CHARGE--THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Ralph C. Link, Pastor
 Trinity Church, New Bloomfield 9:00 A.M.
 Christ Church, Duncannon 10:30 A.M.

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP November 25, 1973

The Organ Prelude
 *The Hymn of Praise 50
 *The Call to Worship
 *The Prayer of Confession (Unison)
 Eternal God, in whom we live and move and have our being, whose face is hidden from us by our sins, and whose mercy we forget in the blindness of our hearts; cleanse us, we beseech thee, from all our offenses, and deliver us from proud thoughts and vain desires, that with lowliness and meekness we may draw near to thee, confessing our faults, confiding in thy grace, and finding in thee our refuge and our strength; through Jesus Christ thy Son. Amen.
 *The Kyrie
 *The Assurance of Pardon
 The Scripture --- Acts 1:1-14
 *The Gloria Patri
 The Anthem (Trinity)
 The Pastoral Prayer
 The Announcements
 The Receiving of Tithes and Offerings
 *The Doxology
 *The Offering Prayer and the Lord's Prayer
 The Hymn of Meditation 246
 The Sermon --- "Mission Possible!"
 The Sermon Prayer
 *The Hymn of Response 161
 *The Benediction
 *The Threefold Amen
 *The Postlude

*Congregation Stands

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

There will be a joint consistory meeting Sunday December 2nd at 7:30 PM at the church in Duncannon.

TRINITY CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The flowers on the altar are in loving memory of Earl Powell from Mary Powell and the family.

CHRIST CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The flowers on the altar are in loving memory of Homer Dowdick from the family.

FATHERS MEETING AFTER CHURCH
 CROSS 2:00 PM

WITNESSING

"Mission Possible!"

Acts

Acts 1:8b, "And you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

In a little town in Central Pennsylvania ~~xxvery dangerous~~ ~~condition existed~~ when the automobile ~~xxx~~ began to seriously outnumber horses and carriages, a very dangerous condition existed. ~~xxx~~ This town was no different than many others in this respect. The condition that existed was a main railroad line running right through the center of the town. When horses and buggies were used for transportation, this posed no real problem. But with the advent of the automobile, accidents began to take place. It was ~~an extremely~~ acute problem in this town because the town was built on two hills. One hill on each side of the town, with the railroad running through the town down at the base of each hill, where it was level.

With more and more cars appearing upon the scene, it soon became a common practice of the young people to try to drive down the one hill at a fast rate of speed, and to race across the tracks just before the train reached the crossing. Many made it, but just as many more did not. This took place mostly on Saturday nights.

Naturally, the railroad installed a watchman, but the cars ignored him, and many times he had to leap for his life, to avoid being hit. Then warning lights were installed, but these too were ignored. Finally they installed crossing gates, but the daring drivers drove through them and broke them down as fast as the railroad could replace them.

One far-sighted businessman, decided that something must be done to prevent the needless waste of life and ~~xxx~~ property that was taking place each week. He spoke to some other business friends of his and soon he had a committee that approached the railroad with a plan to stop this ~~xxxtax~~ needless waste. The plan was to purchase a piece of property adjoining the crossing and to erect a building on it. This building would serve as a meeting place, as well as a ^{base} ~~place to operate~~ their for their operations.

The plan was to meet there on Saturday nights and to take turns standing watch at the crossing. It wasn't too long until the death

all began to decline, and the immediate success of this operation was felt. But soon with the decline of accidents, the youth abandoned their desire to take reckless risks at the crossing, and so the group of men were waiting for just fun and fellowship, and the crossing was soon neglected.

Soon the youth of the town became aware that ~~the~~ the crossing was not being guarded as before, and so they plotted to begin once again to play the dangerous game. Because of the sudden increase in races at the crossing the men were unable to stem the new surge of this movement and so they proved inadequate. All they could do was continue to meet, and to try to ignore the problem that was thrust upon them.

Another group of businessmen, concerned for the safety of some of their own sons and daughters, went to the railroad and petitioned them to do something, but again the warning devices were broken, ignored, and were ineffective. So this group of men purchased the plot of ground on the other side of the road from the first rescue club, and they formulated plans to stop this new wave of death and destruction. Soon their efforts were rewarded with success and once again the racing at the crossing stopped.

But alas, this new group of men started playing cards on Saturday nights, to while away the quiet hours, thrust upon them. Next they were holding raffles, supervising suppers, ~~and involved in~~ running bingo games, and completely ignoring their primary function.

Once again the youth ^{quick} ~~again~~ to notice the laxness of this new rescue group, began to formulate their own plans. They were driving newer more powerful cars and were eager to try their hand at the dangerous game their older brothers and cousins and uncles played. But instead of just racing one car down the hill and across the tracks before the arrival of the train, they now raced two cars side by side, thus increasing the risk and adding to their sense of accomplishment when they succeeded.

And as before the new group was unable to overcome the new impetus of this group of youth and their efforts were of no avail.

But again x yet another group of concerned citizens came forward and formed yet another committee. They too purchased a piece of ground on one of the two remaining corners of the crossing and began the business of deterring the youth from their desire for self-destruction.

They used new methods, of not only standing watch at the crossing, but of going to the schools and initiating programs of safety and instruction in the proper use of motor vehicles. Very soon the problem was brought under control, but alas, again they fell into the trap of inactivity, and once again the situation was out of hand.

Still another group was formed and now there were rescue groups on each of the four corners of the crossing, and as before the new group had its effect for a while, but it also fell into the trap of inactivity

~~and the youth was not deterred, for the youth themselves were not deterred, and this group, too, in time, had no longer had the influence it had when first it was formed.~~

But the railroad began to cut back on the number of trains crossing the tracks daily and soon the youth found that it was no longer the thrill of yesteryear. So they turned their attention to drag racing on dirt tracks in the area, and of seeking other forms of amusement. Thus the four rescue groups could continue to meet and to hold their fellowships, and the other activities, and soon the real purpose of their ~~formation~~ coming into being was forgotten.

Of course all of this never happened. This story is not only the result of an active imagination, but is a modern day parable. As a parable such as Jesus told, it has a meaning and a purpose. Each part of the parable stands for something else in real life. ~~and the youth was not deterred, for the youth themselves were not deterred, and this group, too, in time, had no longer had the influence it had when first it was formed.~~

The youth of the story stand for all people who daily risk the dangers of life. The railroad crossing is Satan and his evil influence in life. The rescue groups are the different denominations that have come upon the scene and have exerted a certain influence for a while, but have gradually been reduced to ineffectiveness. The fellowships and games are the

are expected by each church to hold on to their members and induce others to join. The youth finally going off to other endeavors is the exodus from the churches by young and old alike, because of the ineffectiveness of the churches.

Look around us. We can see literally, churches on almost every corner of our town. Look closely at each and ask how they are meeting the needs of the people. We can only answer that there is a certain segment of the people who will attend a certain church, and a certain segment who will not attend any church.

Right before Jesus left this earth, he gave one final commission to his disciples. He said, "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." He was saying in effect, "Go out into the world and teach and preach, and minister in my name for my sake."

This took place for many years after the departure of Jesus from the scene. It took place that is until the emperor Constantine in an effort to put an end to the persecutions and ravages against the religious people known as Christians, made Christianity ^{the} legal religion in the Holy Roman Empire in 313 A.D. What this did was to bring into the fold any and all who were heathens one day and Christians the next. This was the biggest hoax that was perpetrated in the name of religion.

A religion that had grown from the personal witness of one person to another, was now a religion that was mandated by decree. You were now declared a Christian and did not have ~~to~~ to do anything to attain it.

This also placed religion in the hands of the clergy. What they said and what they did determined the Christianity of the people. From this we can see the excesses that crept into the system until it became so structured and completely a religion of the clergy, Martin Luther rebelled to reform it. His reformation brought on a break in the system that we know as Protestantism. This movement has grown and gone off in many different

... But if we look today at the churches who are growing and the ones who are declining, we can see where the difference lies. The ones who are declining are the ones who are unwilling to go out into the community and to witness on a personal basis to the unchurched. The ones who are growing are the ones in which the laymen are telling others of their personal belief and acceptance of Jesus Christ.

This is not to find fault with the laity, because it is the clergy who have kept the laity in the dark in many instances. But this is the great commission given to us by our Saviour Jesus Christ. We are to go out and be witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and to the end of the earth." This is your task and this is mine.

This is our Jerusalem and out there is our Judea and Samaria and the end of the earth. No church is perfect in its witness in any given community or area. No pastor is perfect in his pursuit of leading his people. It takes pastor and people working together to follow this commission. As we each strive to be witnesses in our own Jerusalems, Judea's, Samaria's and ends of the earth, may God give us His guidance and blessing.

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
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Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.